



Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer of N.Y., right, listens as House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of Calif., left, speaks to reporters at the White House in Washington, Nov. 29, 2022, about their meeting with President Joe Biden.

Associated Press

Biden sees economy avoiding recession, but risks remain

By JOSH BOAK and AAMER MADHANI
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden assured Americans on Friday that the U.S. economy is chugging along in the holiday season, but the very strength of a new jobs report showed that high inflation remains a recession threat. At the White House, the president signed an emergency bill to avert a rail strike that he said could have caused 765,000 job losses in two weeks and plunged the country into a painful downturn. But many voters and econo-

mists still fear that a recession is high and the price of reducing high prices will be layoffs. Biden pointed to the addition of 263,000 jobs in November — with the unemployment rate holding steady at 3.7% — as proof that his policies have bulked up the economy. He suggested that the major recession risk was the freight rail strike, a problem the country avoided by having Congress impose an agreement that raises pay but fails to provide the additional paid sick leave that workers demanded.

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Biden sees economy avoiding recession, but risks remain

Continued from Front

"Things are moving — they're moving in the right direction," Biden said. "As we go into the holiday season, here's what this all means: The Americans are working, the economy is growing."

White House officials do see reason for optimism. Gasoline prices are averaging \$3.45 a gallon, down sharply from a June peak, according to AAA. The economy is expanding after shrinking in size during the first half of the year. And since July, workers' average hourly earnings have been rising faster than consumer prices.

But inflation can be a game of whack-a-mole, and Friday's employment report suggested that wage growth actually could be part of the problem.

Inflation has been something of a moving target during Biden's presidency. Supply chain challenges and shortages pushed up prices as the country started to recover from the pandemic in 2021. Higher oil and food costs drove up inflation after Russia invaded Ukraine in February. And the jobs report showed that wage growth accelerated sharply, which could fuel inflation going forward.



President Joe Biden speaks before signing H.J.Res.100, a bill that aims to avert a freight rail strike, in the Roosevelt Room at the White House, Friday, Dec. 2, 2022, in Washington.

Associated Press

The Federal Reserve is attempting to reduce inflation by raising its benchmark interest rates. That action reduces economic activity in order to bring down prices.

On Wednesday, Fed Chair Jerome Powell suggested the U.S. central bank might not have to raise rates as aggressively to return inflation to the 2% annual target. That comment caused the stock market to rise, only for the optimism to fizzle out on Friday as the new and revised wage data

indicated the Fed might need to do more to cool the economy.

"With these revisions, the pace of wage growth is more consistent with 5% inflation than with 2% inflation," said Harvard University professor Jason Furman, formerly the top economist in the Obama White House. "In this sense it may take a larger adjustment in labor markets than previously hoped to bring inflation down." The president's key message is that his policies have helped to avoid ca-

tastrophes such as a recession caused by a rail strike. The bill he signed Friday binds rail companies and workers to a proposed settlement that was reached between the railroads and union leaders in September but rejected by the workers of some unions.

"The bill I'm about to sign ends a difficult rail dispute and helps our nation avoid what without a doubt would have been an economic catastrophe at a very bad time in the calendar," said Biden. He said

his team helped negotiate a "good product, but we still have more work to do in my view."

Members of four of the 12 unions involved had rejected the proposed contract as lacking sufficient paid sick leave, setting up the possibility of a strike beginning Dec. 9. Biden acknowledged the shortcoming and said he would continue to push for that benefit for every U.S. worker.

"I've supported paid sick leave for a long time," said the president, a staunch labor union supporter. "I'm going to continue that fight until we succeed."

He said that Republican lawmakers blocked the inclusion of seven days of paid sick leave in the agreement, and it's unclear how he would get backing for expanding family leave to all workers with the GOP winning the House majority in November's elections. Republican leaders have tapped into deep doubts about the U.S. economy with party officials noting that higher prices have caused Americans' savings rate to hit the lowest level in 17 years. About three-quarters of voters last month called economic conditions "poor" or "not so good," according to AP VoteCast. □



FBI Director Christopher Wray speaks at the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan, Friday, Dec. 2, 2022, in Ann Arbor, Mich.

Associated Press

By ERIC TUCKER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — FBI Director Chris Wray is raising national security concerns about TikTok, warning Friday that control of the popular video sharing app

is in the hands of a Chinese government "that doesn't share our values."

Wray said the FBI was concerned that the Chinese had the ability to control the app's recommendation algorithm, "which al-

FBI director raises national security concerns about TikTok

lows them to manipulate content, and if they want to, to use it for influence operations." He also asserted that China could use the app to collect data on its users that could be used for traditional espionage operations.

"All of these things are in the hands of a government that doesn't share our values and that has a mission that's very much at odds with what's in the best interests of the United States. That should concern us," Wray told an audience at the University of Michigan's Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy.

Those concerns are similar to ones he raised during congressional appearances last month when the issue came up. And they come during ongoing dialogue in Washington about the app.

TikTok is owned by Beijing-based ByteDance. A TikTok spokesperson did not immediately return an email seeking comment on Friday.

But at a Senate hearing in September, TikTok Chief Operating Officer Vanessa Pappas responded to questions from members of both parties by saying that the company protects all

data from American users and that Chinese government officials have no access to it.

"We will never share data, period," Pappas said.

Concerned about China's influence over TikTok, the Trump administration in 2020 threatened to ban the app within the U.S. and pressured ByteDance to sell TikTok to a U.S. company. U.S. officials and the company are now in talks over a possible agreement that would resolve American security concerns, a process that Wray said was taking place across U.S. government agencies. □

Prosecutor: Evidence shows Trump 'explicitly' OK'd tax fraud

By MICHAEL R. SISAK

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — In the end, it wasn't a last-minute smoking gun but a prosecutor insisting that evidence shows Donald Trump was aware of a scheme that his Trump Organization's executives hatched to avoid paying personal income taxes on millions of dollars worth of company-paid perks.

After telling jurors on Thursday that Trump "knew exactly what was going on" with the scheme, Assistant Manhattan District Attorney Joshua Steinglass followed up by citing trial evidence and testimony that he said made clear "Mr. Trump is explicitly sanctioning tax fraud."

Steinglass, speaking on the last day before deliberations at the Trump Organization's criminal tax fraud, showed jurors a lease Trump signed for one executive's Manhattan apartment and a memo the former president initialed authorizing a pay cut for another executive who got perks.

He also cited Weisselberg's claim, during his three days of testimony, that he told Trump he would pay him



Former President Donald Trump announces a third run for president as he speaks at Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach, Fla., Nov. 15, 2022.

back after Trump agreed to cover his grandchildren's hefty private school tuition cost. Weisselberg then adjusted his payroll records to cut his pre-tax salary by the cost of the tuition.

"I mention this all to show that this whole narrative that Mr. Trump was blissfully ignorant is just not real," Steinglass said.

Trump himself is not on trial, as Steinglass reminded ju-

rors, but Judge Juan Manuel Merchan gave him the green light to talk about Trump's possible awareness of the scheme after the company's lawyers, in their summations, claimed that Trump knew nothing about it.

Trump has denied knowing that Weisselberg and other executives were dodging taxes, writing on his Truth Social platform this week:

"There was no gain for 'Trump,' and we had no knowledge of it."

After Steinglass finished Friday, Trump Organization lawyer Michael van der Veen asked Merchan to declare a mistrial, arguing that the prosecutor had irreparably harmed the defense by effectively portraying Trump as a co-conspirator in the tax fraud scheme.

"I don't believe it's necessary to declare a mistrial. That's not really even a thought," Merchan said, agreeing to instead caution jurors about Steinglass' remarks.

But Steinglass' sudden focus on Trump's knowledge of the scheme, right as the Trump company's trial was ambling to a conclusion, begged the question: Why wasn't he charged, too?

The Manhattan district attorney's office declined comment, citing the ongoing trial. District Attorney Alvin Bragg, who inherited the case when he took office in January, has said that an investigation of Trump is "active and ongoing," and that no decision has been made on whether to charge him.

The Trump Organization, the entity through which Trump manages his golf courses, hotels and other ventures, is charged with helping some top executives avoid paying income taxes on non-monetary compensation. The company's case is the only trial to arise from the Manhattan district attorney's office's three-year investigation of Trump and his business practices. □

Associated Press

U.S. targets Russian mercenary group over religious freedom

By MATTHEW LEE

AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration on Friday placed a well-known Russian paramilitary organization on a list of religious freedom violators alongside a number of notorious terrorist organizations.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced he had designated the Wagner Group as an "entity of particular concern" for its activities in the Central African Republic. Also on the list are Afghanistan's Taliban, Nigeria's Boko Haram, Somalia's al-Shabab and two factions of the Islamic State group.

"Our announcement of these designations is in keeping with our values and interests to protect

national security and to advance human rights around the globe," Blinken said. "Countries that ef-

fectively safeguard this and other human rights are more peaceful, stable, prosperous and more reli-

able partners of the United States than those that do not."

The Wagner Group is run by a confidant of Russian President Vladimir Putin, Yevgeny Prigozhin, and its mercenaries are accused by Western countries and UN experts of numerous human rights abuses throughout Africa, including in the Central African Republic, Libya and Mali.

Friday's designation does not immediately carry U.S. sanctions but opens up those targeted to potential penalties for violations of religious freedom. The Wagner Group and the other "entities of particular concern" are already subject to an array of U.S. sanctions.

In addition to his designa-

tion of the Wagner Group and the others, Blinken identified China, Cuba, Eritrea, Iran, Myanmar, Nicaragua, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan as "countries of particular concern" for religious freedom violations.

All of those countries, which Blinken said have "engaged in or tolerated particularly severe violations of religious freedom," have been on the list previously. Blinken also put Algeria, the Central African Republic, Comoros and Vietnam on a "special watch list" for religious freedom violations, meaning they could eventually be hit by U.S. sanctions unless their records in the area improve. □



Secretary of State Antony Blinken, from right, Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, and Rep. Barbara Lee, D-Calif., attend a World AIDS Day event hosted by the Business Council for International Understanding in Washington, Friday, Dec. 2, 2022.

Associated Press

Ex-children's hospital doctor charged with sex crimes

By SARAH RANKIN

Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — The former medical director of a Virginia hospital that serves vulnerable children has been charged with four felony sex crimes in connection with abuse at the facility years ago, according to a prosecutor and court records.

A grand jury indicted Dr. Daniel N. Davidow of Richmond, a former longtime employee of the Cumberland Hospital for Children and Adolescents, last month, the records show. The records were unsealed Thursday, the prosecutor announced Friday.

Robert F. Donnelly, an attorney for Davidow, told The Associated Press by email that "we are still learning details and facts, so we are not in a position to comment."

The hospital, located in New Kent County, about half an hour east of the state capital, treats children and young adults with complex medical needs, including chronic illnesses, brain injuries and neurobehavioral disorders.

An investigation into staff at the hospital by Virginia State Police has been ongoing since 2017. The facility is also facing civil lawsuits that say it operated without proper licensing and was "devoid of fundamen-



This aerial image taken with a drone shows Cumberland Hospital for Children and Adolescents on Tuesday Sept. 20, 2022, in Richmond, Va.

Associated Press

tal sanitation or humanity," allegations the facility denies.

The lawsuits and other concerns from patients' parents about the hospital, which have been highlighted by persistent reporting from Richmond TV station WTVR, have raised alarms at the highest levels of state government over at least two gubernatorial administrations.

In the civil lawsuits, more than three dozen former female patients allege Davidow sexually abused them during physical exams. In court documents and through an attorney, Davidow has previously denied those allegations.

Kevin Biniazan, an attorney

representing the former patients in the civil case, said Friday he had confirmed the indictments were connected to allegations raised by two of his clients. "The first thing that's in my mind and probably in the minds of all my clients is that this was a long time coming," he said. "And in many ways I hope that it provides the public and my clients a sense of validation. ... They've been doubted, and I think in many ways discouraged, from coming forward in many instances."

Neither an attorney for the hospital nor representatives of its parent company immediately responded to an emailed inquiry from AP. A

spokeswoman for Virginia State Police said she was working on a statement.

Davidow faces two counts of aggravated sexual battery and two counts of object sexual penetration, all felonies.

Charging documents offer few additional details about the allegations, though they say both victims were children. The documents allege the abuse of one victim occurred from March 1, 2018, to April 30, 2018. The other child was abused from mid-October of 2017 to Dec. 1, 2017, the documents say.

T. Scott Renick, the commonwealth's attorney in New Kent County, said in a brief statement that the

charges were brought in connection with "acts of sexual abuse and sexual assault that occurred" at the hospital. He said his office would have no further comment.

In the case of both of the sexual battery charges, indictments say Davidow abused the victim through her "mental incapacity or physical helplessness."

Renick's small office has been handling charging decisions in the Cumberland matter since Attorney General Jason Miyares handed it off earlier this year in a move that surprised some legal observers, given the nature and scope of the allegations.

Miyares' spokeswoman has offered a procedural explanation for the change in course.

Under the direction of the previous attorney general, Mark Herring, the office prosecuted two hospital staffers.

One, a 72-year-old psychotherapist, was charged with sexually abusing a patient and died by suicide the same day he was due in court for a plea hearing. The other, a behavioral technician, was sentenced in December to a year in prison after pleading no contest to an allegation that she intentionally burned a disabled child with scalding water. □

Oklahoma pot farm illegally obtained permit before 4 slain



This photo provided by the Miami-Dade Corrections & Rehabilitation Department shows Wu Chen.

Associated Press

By KEN MILLER

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — The Oklahoma marijuana farm where four people were killed and one was wounded was operating under an illegally obtained license to grow marijuana for medical purposes, an Oklahoma State Bureau of Narcotics spokesman said Friday. The application for the license by Kevin Pham fraudulently stated that the operation was 75% owned by an Oklahoma resident, as required by state law,

said bureau spokesperson Mark Woodward. The pot farm on a 10-acre (4-hectare) property west of Hennessey, a town about 55 miles (90 kilometers) northwest of Oklahoma City, was the site of four execution-style killings in November that targeted three men and one woman, all Chinese citizens.

"Agents have interviewed the man who is listed as the 75% owner ... that person has no knowledge of operations" at the farm, Woodward said.

"He just went to Pham's office for payments" as the registered 75% owner, Woodward said.

Pham has been arrested on drug and weapons charges. Court documents do not list an attorney who could speak on his behalf. Woodward did not disclose the amount of the payments to the man he described as a "ghost owner" and said the man has not been arrested, but could face fraud charges.

Woodward said the OBN is investigating whether the

marijuana grown at the farm was illegally sold in other states. "Our law says what is grown here has to be sold here" in Oklahoma, Woodward said, and can not be transported across state lines. The names of the four people killed Nov. 20 have not been released. A suspect in the case has been extradited back to the state from Florida, where he was arrested Nov. 22 after the vehicle he was driving was flagged by a car tag reader, police in Miami Beach said. □

European security org faces existential crisis at meeting

By VANESSA GERA

Associated Press

LODZ, Poland (AP) — A security organization born in the Cold War to maintain peace in Europe ended a high-level meeting Friday without a final resolution, underlining the existential crisis it is facing amid Russia's war against Ukraine. The war launched by one member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe against another has created hurdles for the 57-nation group. It makes decisions based on the consensus of all members, which rendered it impossible for the vast majority that condemn the war to get through a final resolution opposing Russia's aggression. Running through the two-day meeting of foreign ministers and other representatives, the OSCE's first such high-level meeting since the Feb. 24 invasion, was the question of how it can continue to function without consensus from Russia and its ally Belarus, which say they have been unfairly isolated. "I have no doubts that in



Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Zbigniew Rau, center, delivers a closing speech during a high-level meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in Lodz, Poland, Friday, Dec. 2, 2022.

the next few years it will be extremely difficult for this organization to deliver on its mandate," Polish Foreign Minister Zbigniew Rau said at a concluding news conference. Poland currently holds the organization's rotating chair. The problems facing the organization predate the

war. Russia has hampered decisions on budgets, senior appointments and other critical work for years. The Vienna-based OSCE has a wide-ranging mission to protect peace, with a strong emphasis placed on human rights in addition to arms control and other military security issues. The

organization is best known to the public for its role in monitoring elections. But it has struggled amid a real war. After Russia invaded Ukraine in February, the organization evacuated its staff members working on a peace mission in Ukraine, where Moscow-backed separatists in the east had

fought Ukrainian forces for the previous eight years. Three Ukrainian employees remain "unlawfully detained" by Russian forces in eastern Ukraine since April, OSCE Secretary-General Helga Schmid said Friday. Still, Schmid argued that the organization was "not paralyzed" and said it was finding ways to work around Russia's obstruction, for instance by using a donor-funded program to do demining work and to help survivors of sexual violence in Ukraine. Notably absent from the conference was Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who was banned from entering Poland because he is on a European Union sanctions list. Lavrov spent 40 minutes of a news conference in Moscow on Thursday complaining about his exclusion as the meeting opened in Lodz, Poland. North Macedonia is set to take over chairing the OSCE in 2023. Bujar Osmani, the country's foreign minister, said that despite all the obstacles he would not declare this week's meeting a failure. □

Associated Press

Turkey: Russia, U.S. failed to clear militia from Syria border

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Turkey's foreign minister charged Friday that the United States and Russia have failed to meet promises to clear Syria's border with Turkey of Kurdish militants, forcing Ankara to intervene.

Speaking at the Mediterranean Dialogues forum in Rome, Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu also said that Turkey was seeking reconciliation with Syria's government to facilitate the return of refugees, cooperate in fighting extrem-

ists and to end the conflict in Syria. Cavusoglu's comments came after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan vowed last month to launch a new land invasion of northern Syria to target militant Kurdish groups, following a Nov. 13 explosion in Istanbul that killed six people.

The Turkish military has launched a barrage of airstrikes on suspected militant targets in northern Syria and Iraq in retaliation. The Kurdish groups denied involvement in the bombing. They said Turkish strikes have killed civilians and are threatening the fight against the Islamic State group.

"We reached an understanding with the United States and the Russian Federation," Cavusoglu said. "They committed to push

those terrorists further south from our border. ... But since then, they haven't met their commitments." He was referring to separate deals reached with

Moscow and Washington in 2019, under which both agreed to push Syrian Kurdish fighters from a wide swath of territory south of Turkey's border. □



Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu attends the Med 2022 Dialogues forum, in Rome, Friday, Dec. 2, 2022.

Associated Press

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Lagoon dries up as drought grips Peru's southern Andes

By FRANKLIN BRICEÑO

Associated Press

CCONCHACCOTA, Peru (AP) —

From her home under the baking sun of Peru's southern Andes, Vilma Huamaní can see the small Cconchaccota lagoon, the axis of her community's life. It has been a source of trout, fun for children eager to swim, beauty as flamingos flew from over the mountains and water for thirsty sheep.

Nowadays, all Huamaní sees of the lagoon 4,100 meters (13,120 feet) above sea level is a plain of cracked and broken soil surrounded by yellow grass. "It has totally dried up," she said.

The rainy season in this part of South America should have started in September, but the area is experiencing its driest period in almost a half century, affecting more than 3,000 communities in the central and southern Andes of Peru.

A light rain last week only the second in almost eight months prompted residents to set bowls outdoors to collect some water. The drops lifted dust as they hit the ground, and by the next morning, the sun had evaporated the scant moisture.



An emaciated sheep walks on the dry bed of the Cconchaccota lagoon in the Apurimac region of Peru, Friday, Nov. 25, 2022.

Dead sheep and lambs so weak they can barely stand can be found among sparse yellow grass. The planting of potatoes, which is the only crop that grows in Huamaní's village, has been delayed, leading many to expect food shortages in the coming months because people are already feeding themselves from their dehydrated potato reserves.

"Every day, I ask I hope the rain falls ... when there

is rain the grasses grow, the potatoes (grow)," said Huamaní, 38, who moved with her four children from Peru's capital, Lima, to Cconchaccota in 2020 in an effort to flee the coronavirus pandemic.

The absence of rain in part of the Andes occurs as a result of the La Niña phenomenon, present in 2022 for the third consecutive year, according to the United Nations' meteorological agency. The drought is also

hitting parts of Bolivia, Paraguay and Argentina.

Yuri Escajadillo, a climatologist with Peru's National Meteorology and Hydrology Service, said an index used to measure droughts qualified the region as "extremely dry." "It is a record value," Escajadillo said.

In Cconchaccota, there is no drinking water, sewage or telephone service. People drink water they get from a nearby spring, though it sometimes dries

up, too.

Residents say their appeals to local authorities for help went unanswered for more than two months.

So, Grisaldo Challanca, a young farmer, used his cellphone to record videos and prepare a report about the drought. He posted it on a Facebook page after he climbed to about 4,500 meters above sea level to get an internet connection.

The long-delayed response from the regional authorities arrived last week with the delivery of packages of fodder oats for the surviving sheep, cattle, alpacas and llamas.

"The animals are all bone," said John Franklin Challanca, a 12-year-old shepherd, whose family has lost 50 sheep.

The Andes is one of the world's most sensitive regions to climate migrations because of droughts, tropical storms and hurricanes, heavy rains and floods, according to the latest report by the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

"Global warming has caused glacier loss in the Andes from 30% to more than 50% of their area since the 1980s. □

Canadian man charged in deaths of 3 more Indigenous women

WINNIPEG, Manitoba (AP)

— Police alleged Thursday that a Canadian man previously charged with murdering an Indigenous woman also killed three other women two also confirmed to be Indigenous and one believed to be.

Jeremy Skibicki was charged May 18 and kept in custody after the partial remains of Rebecca Contois, 24, were found in a garbage bin near an apartment building. Contois lived in Winnipeg but was a member of O-Chi-Chak-Ko-Sipi First Nation, also known as Crane River. Police at the time said they were not ruling out more victims. On Thursday, they said Skibicki is now charged

with first-degree murder in three other deaths in the same short period in the spring. Police said Morgan Beatrice Harris, 39, and

Mercedes Myran, 26, were killed in the first week of May. Both women lived in Winnipeg and were members of Long Plain First Na-

tion. Police said a fourth woman, unidentified but believed to be Indigenous, is thought to have been killed on or about last March 15. They released a photo of a jacket similar to one she had been wearing. "It's always unsettling whenever there is any kind of a serial killing," Winnipeg Police Chief Danny Smyth said. "It does involve Indigenous women. We're very sensitive to the whole missing and murdered Indigenous women investigation and inquiry and the recommendations that came out of that."

Police released few details about their investigation, but said they have no leads to any other potential vic-

tims. "I don't know if they were specifically being targeted, but clearly the victims in this are all Indigenous women," Smyth said. Smyth said authorities haven't found the bodies of the other three victims but said they have enough evidence to charge Skibicki with first degree murder.

He declined to release further details because the investigation is still underway. "We have much more work to do to protect the lives of Indigenous women and girls," Winnipeg Mayor Scott Gillingham said.

"Right now there are far too many people experiencing homeless, addiction and poverty and that puts him in vulnerable positions." □



Winnipeg Police Inspector Shawn Pike provides an update to an ongoing homicide investigation in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Thursday, Dec. 1, 2022.

Associated Press

Ceremony to turn on the lights and reopen Caya G.F. Betico Croes for car traffic

ORANJESTAD – The first of December, beginning to feel the atmosphere of the year-end holidays, minister of Education and Sport, Endy Croes joined his colleagues of the Wever-Croes II Cabinet to be present during the ceremony to turn on the lights in the main street of Oranjestad, Caya G. F. Betico Croes.

The Prime Minister, Mrs. Evelyn Wever-Croes indicated that the main street



will be temporarily open for traffic, in order to bring life to the shopping area and encourage the people to support or local businesses. Vice-Prime Minister, Ursell Arends accompanied by his wife and business owners were also present, and around 6pm the lights were turned on in the Caya G.F. Betico Croes. This way, the street was opened for all cars during the holiday season. □

Winners of Wiki Loves Monuments Aruba 2022 are known

ORANJESTAD – Yesterday afternoon, Stichting Monumentenfonds Aruba (SMFA) announced the winners of the Wiki Loves Monuments Aruba 2022 competition.

Wiki Loves Monuments is an international project that has the goal of documenting monuments around the world. Contestants not only take part in the competition in order to win, but they also contribute to helping document monuments in Aruba and to sharing these with the whole world.



Wiki Loves Monuments Aruba, and the 12th edition of the international project. This year, Aruba received a total of 144 photographs, and 39 countries took part in the competition. A total of 10 photographs were nominated, and these 10 photographs will continue participating in the international Wiki Loves Monuments competition. The results of this international competition will be known at the end of January 2023.

two categories. Category 2 consists of photographs of monuments that are not protected. This category helps the foundation see through the eyes of the public themselves what they consider to have a monumental value. Category 1 is the category for photographs of protected monuments.

This year is the first time that the photographs of both categories can continue in the international competition. In previous years, it was only photographs from Category 1 that could go on to compete in the international competition.

A jury consisting of three members was in charge of choosing the winners in both categories in Aruba. In the Category 2, the winner was Dyanne Lopez Schipper with a photograph of a 'cas di torto', and in the Category 1 the winner was Jeroen Lucas, with a photograph of the California Lighthouse. □

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Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Divi Village Golf & Beach Resort

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently recognized the Emerald Ambassadors of Aruba by awarding them the Emerald certificate as a token of appreciation for visiting the island for more than 35 years.

Honorees were: Charles & Sharon Nemser resident of Massachusetts, United States

Ms. Olga Ruiz representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and members of the Divi Village Golf Beach Resort bestowed the certification of the Ambassadors and presented the Ambassadors with gifts, and thanked them on behalf of the Government of Aruba for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination for so many years. Honor-

ees definitely consider Aruba their home away from home!
The top reason for returning to Aruba, provided by the honorees were:
Very relaxing
Sun, surf and sand
Friends we have made, locals and tourist
The safety of Aruba
Food, shopping and activities ☐

Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors of Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently honored the Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba and the Emerald Ambassadors of Aruba by awarding the Ambassadors with the Goodwill certificate and the Emerald certificate in recognition of their visits to the island for more than 20 and 35 years, respectively.

Honorees were:
Goodwill Ambassadors (more than 20 years):
John & Sandra Busino residents of New York, United States

Emerald Ambassador (more than 35 years):
David & Julie Maheu residents of Rhode Island, United States

ed States

During the ceremony Ms. Olga Ruiz representing the Aruba Tourism Authority (A.T.A), and members Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa bestowed the certification of the Ambassadors, and presented the Ambassadors with gifts, and thanked them on behalf of the



Government of Aruba for choosing Aruba as her favorite vacation destination for so many years. Aruba is definitely considered by the Honorees, their Home Away from Home!

Top reason for returning to Aruba, provided by the

honorees were:
Beaches and ocean at Manchebo
The people that work at Manchebo
Fantastic weather
Restaurants
Hospitality and friendliness of the natives in Aruba
The safety of Aruba. ☐



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Aruba to me

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Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from **Carmela and Joseph Villari**

Our lovely visitors wrote to us saying;

"We are back at our 2nd home to celebrate the



Christmas holidays and staying at The Hilton Hotel. Here is a picture of us at the

Flying Fishbone and enjoying this breathtaking view." Welcome back to our hap-

py Island and thank you very much for sharing your time here with us! □

Information evening about sexually transmitted diseases

ORANJESTAD — On November 30, 2022, the Department of Public Health DVG, the Horacio Oduber Hospital, and the Health Promotion Platform held a joint information evening for healthcare workers.



Dr. de Kort and Dr. Rodenburg of the HOH were the speakers at the event. The information evening was in connection with International Aids Day on December 1 and preparation for the upcoming holiday season and carnival. The purpose of the evening was to provide information to all healthcare workers about sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, Chlamydia, and the existing taboo

about these subjects.

Dr. Rodenburg and Dr. de Kort talked extensively about their medical experience in Aruba and abroad. They explained the differences in the awareness of these subjects and provided tips and valuable information in the context of our community. They also provided information on diagnostic, treatment, care, and treatment centers for dif-



ferent cases.

awareness.

Dr. de Kort emphasized the importance of support groups in these cases. The lack of support groups affects the process of individuals with an STD, but also groups like LGBTQ+.

It is essential to state that there are positive changes in STDs, and the community is slowly responding positively and creating more

Minister of Public Health Dangui Oduber is grateful to the DVG Health Promotion, the Horacio Oduber Hospital, and the Health Promotion Platform for organizing this event and sharing valuable information with the healthcare sector and the community in the wake of the upcoming season. □

Today Is Going To Be A Good Day

Here's why: Aruba Today collected some things to do BEYOND the beach. Yes, we know. Aruba, located 15 miles north of Venezuela in the warm waters of the southern Caribbean, is home to beautiful white-sand beaches, 82-degree days, and thus ideal for the perfect beach day. But we are also blessed with some of the warmest people in the world and our island is 19.6 miles long and 6 miles across, with a total area of 70 square miles. Bit more to discover than the white stretch on the coastline we say. Let's mention some of these hidden gems.

Nature Calls

The Arikok National park is worth the ride. We love the hikes that are guided by the park's rangers whose job is to maintain trails and protect natural resources. The flora and fauna are beautiful and the historical sites tell you about the island's indigenous roots. The guided tours are even free of charge. If you are not up to walking, you can drive through the park, one way or another this park is a great place to spend an entire day. Cruising through the landscape you end up at some of the most stunning beaches like Dos Playa or Daimara Beach. In Total the park consists of 7907 acres protected nature with a richness of animals living in it. The Aruban whip-tail lizard (cododo), Aruban cat eye snake (santanero) and endangered rattle snake (cascabel) are just some of them, you can also admire these close in the park's Visitors' Center. For



more information, visit the website www.arubanationalpark.org

Philip's Animal Garden

To stay with the animals, let's hop to an amazing place. Something different to do, an experience that is to be enjoyed by people of all ages. Welcome to Philip's Animal Garden. We are not talking about a zoo here, this is actually a sanctuary for all types of creatures, from horses to peacocks, kangaroos to turtles, monkeys, goats, and many, many more different species. The place was founded in 2009 and it is the only organization rescuing and rehabilitating exotic animals in Aruba, which has resulted in an amazing collection of these animals. They provide a suitable living environment for all the rescued animals. Up until now the owner, Philip, has built this shelter with his own efforts;



building all the cages from scratch, designing all structures and welding them with his own bare hands. His goal is to upgrade the facilities to a world-class animal shelter with veterinary care and round-the-clock staffs. With the input from the Aruban community and visitors they provide the best care for these animals. Please check out their website for

more information: www.philipsanimalgarden.com.

The Lighthouse

No, you would not think of this as a hidden gem. The California Lighthouse is actually one of the most known highlights in Aruba and many repeated guests most probably took the ride uphill already. But, there is a significant change to this

tower. Since September 2016 you can climb the top. In 2015 Stichting Monumentenfonds started the restoration of the California Lighthouse. The project finished in September 2016 and the Lighthouse is now open for visitors to enjoy the beautiful view from the top. The construction of the California Lighthouse started in 1915. The name 'California' came from a vessel of the West India Company and Pacific Steamship Co. called 'California' that shipwrecked in the area in 1891. Therefore they came up with the idea of building a lighthouse that could indicate the island's eastern tip to ships with its light. www.arubalighthouse.com will give you more information.

Kayak in the Mangroves

Mangel Halto at Savaneta is definitely a place not to miss out on. The beautiful beach with the natural mangroves is simply a beauty, but if you are into a more active way to enjoy the nature: take a kayak. While you are doing some workout -as it might get a little windy and rough-, you will see the island from a different perspective. You can even make a stop to do some snorkeling at the reef. Its fun, it's healthy and for sure something else. There are several companies that offer kayak tours, we had good experience with The Shack Kayak Tours Aruba, find them on Facebook. □



The Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA) and Fundacion Parke Nacional Aruba (FPNA) Organise Marine Management Workshop in Aruba

From the 21st to the 23rd of November 2022, the Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA) together with Fundacion Parke Nacional Aruba (FPNA) hosted a workshop on Marine Management in Aruba. Delegates from both governments and park management organizations representing islands in the Dutch Caribbean came together for in-depth discussion on how to address the unique challenges our islands face when protecting the ocean. It is the first time such a workshop was organised for the Dutch Caribbean.

At the start of the workshop invited experts from Australia, Jamaica, United Kingdom, Colombia, the USA and Aruba presented examples of best practices and innovative approaches to ocean protection from around the world, which were used in problem solving exercises and round table discussions on an expansive mix of subjects such as marine park management, sustainable fisheries management, control and enforcement at sea, sustainable tourism and strategic stakeholder mapping. Minister Ursell Arends, the Minister of Integrity, Transport, Nature and Senior Affairs for the government of Aruba kicked-off the workshop, outlining



the ambitious agenda that Aruba has for marine conservation, which includes establishing an 'island-round' marine park.

Minister Ursell Arends: "For many years, Aruba has prioritised our economic prosperity, at the expense of our nature. The ambition is to expand the current four-area marine park

to an island-round marine park as part of a larger goal for Aruba's eventual Marine Spatial Plan. Rather than prohibit activities, the island-round marine park model will create a roadmap for a sustainable balance between the human and economic activities of our maritime space and the conservation of marine life."

As part of the workshop, participants were invited to hike through Parke Nacional Arikok to learn more about Aruba's diverse flora and fauna. This hike served as a reminder of why it is vital to protect nature and also gave FPNA the chance to showcase the important work the team is doing to protect and conserve nature in Aruba.

on local level and cross-island is key in implementing innovative approaches to protect our oceans for generations to come.

This was the first of a series of workshops that DCNA plans to host in the coming years, each time on a different island but all focused on sustainable management of natural resources and the protection of nature. This workshop was generously sponsored by the Oceans5 funders' collaborative and supported by the Blue Marine Foundation and the Allen Institute for Artificial Intelligence.

"It was great to see such a big diversity of participants who were all enthusiastic about collaborating with each other," says Irene Kingma, Policy Advisor to DCNA. "As DCNA-secretariat, we play a facilitatory role towards our members, and capacity building and knowledge sharing is a central part in that." □

"We were honored to collaborate with DCNA to host the Marine Management workshop in Aruba and welcome key stakeholders and international experts to share knowledge and expertise on marine management with the different island representatives", said Natasha Silva, Chief Conservation Officer, FPNA. Now more than ever, our oceans are under great threat, and from the workshop it is evident that we all have ambitious plans to protect and manage our island's marine environment and beyond. Collaboration



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 39 Baseball's

1 Flock Speaker

leader 40 Unassum-

7 Close ing

11 Attraction

12 El —, DOWN

Texas 1 Make

13 Laughed thirsty

loudly 2 Hilo hello

14 Peer 3 Murdered 10 Flung 25 Most

group? 4 Jailer 16 Party adorable

15 Face 5 Metal VIPs 28 Mariners

parts sources 18 Wide 30 Treat

16 Grazing 6 Roulette 20 Monk's badly

groups bet place 31 Heads of

17 Slugger 7 Ignore the limit 22 Per- France

Aaron 8 Harvest 23 Escape 32 Put in

18 Dress part festival event expert office

19 Shucking units 9 Lemon, 24 Landing 34 TV's Jay

21 Pop perhaps spot 36 Brink

22 "What's the point?"

25 Dove

sound

26 Diamond

corner

27 Left over

29 Overdue

33 Right now

34 Defama-

tory text

35 Satanic

36 Good

name

37 Posted

38 "Be right

with you"

12-3

A XYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

12-3 CRYPTOQUOTE

SGQ DFIFL FA NELRUZSRJQ RN
AIFOQLN: SGQ DFIFL FA
ORUSQL RN RU SGQ
RJXZRUXSRFU. — SQLLR
ZKRIIQJQSN

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: INSTEAD OF WORRYING ABOUT WHAT YOU CANNOT CONTROL, SHIFT YOUR ENERGY TO WHAT YOU CAN CREATE. — ROY T. BENNETT

LAPSE ALPHA
ERROL BARON
AROSE AMONG
SIT AFT JOE
EVE NEE ERR
SECTOR ACES
TORRENT
SHIP ANTICS
QUO ART ORC
USN SIR NEO
ATILT APIAN
ROSIE POSSE
ENTER SITES

Yesterday's answer

Higher food prices worsen hunger crisis this holiday season

By ASHRAF KHALIL

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Staffers at Bread for the City, a venerable charity in the nation's capital, thought they were prepared for this year's annual pre-Thanksgiving Holiday Helpers food giveaway. The pandemic had faded, but inflation was high, so they budgeted to give out 12,000 meals, 20% higher than normal pre-pandemic levels.

But they were quickly overwhelmed, with long lines of clients waiting hours to receive a free turkey and a \$50 debit card for groceries. They were forced to shut down three days early after helping 16,000 people, many more than anticipated.

"We don't want to re-traumatize our community by having them wait outside four hours for a turkey," said Ashley Domm, the charity's chief development officer. "We are not set up to have hundreds of people lined up on a city street."

Bread for the City's experience reflects a larger dynamic playing out across the country. What many Americans hoped would be the first normal holiday season in three years has instead been thrown into a heightened hunger crisis once again, with Christmas on the horizon.

A September report by the Urban Institute estimated that about 1 in 5 adults experienced household food insecurity last summer, about the same as during the first year of the pandemic but a sharp increase from the spring of 2021. Black and Hispanic adults reported higher rates of



Maria Correa, of Washington, center, who says she is sick with cancer, cannot work, and that things are especially difficult because of the pandemic, accepts a turkey and Thanksgiving trimmings during an annual Thanksgiving food giveaway at The Redeemed Christian Church of God New Wine Assembly, Tuesday, Nov. 22, 2022, in Washington.

Associated Press

food insecurity than their white counterparts, according to the report.

"In the pandemic, nobody had jobs and nobody had money," said Nancy Murphy, a 45-year old caregiver picking up a frozen turkey and groceries last week from a giveaway at the Redeemed Christian Church of God New Wine Assembly church in northeast Washington. "Now they're back at their jobs but the money isn't going far enough. It's still hard."

The government estimates food prices will be up 9.5% to 10.5% this year. And that's squeezing the budgets of many Americans and the food banks that have helped them, especially with the expiration of the massive flow of pandemic relief aid. "Inflation has been the story of the year," said Michael Altfest, director of community engagement at the Alameda County Food Bank in Oakland, California.

Altfest said the level of

community need remains 50% to 70% higher than pre-pandemic levels, and about 30% of calls to the food bank's emergency helpline are from first-time callers.

In multiple cases, charities and food banks had prepared for increased numbers due to inflation, only to find the level of need had far exceeded their projections. The Capital Area Food Bank in Washington originally projected it would need to distribute about 43 million meals during the July 2022-June 2023 budget year. Now four months into that fiscal year, it already is 22% ahead of those predictions.

"That was an educated prediction with a good four or five months of information," said the food bank's CEO, Radha Muthiah. "We are always thinking about Thanksgiving and Christmas right when everybody's heading to the beach in summer."

In Illinois, Jim Conwell of the Greater Chicago Food bank says the need remains elevated. "So we're purchasing more and we're spending more on what we do purchase," he said.

His organization's network served about 30% more households in August 2022, compared to the previous August. □

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24/7

Musk's company aims to soon test brain implant in people

By **LAURA UNGAR**
AP Science Writer

Tech billionaire Elon Musk said his Neuralink company is seeking permission to test its brain implant in people soon.

In a "show and tell" presentation livestreamed Wednesday night, Musk said his team is in the process of asking U.S. regulators to allow them to test the device. He said he thinks the company should be able to put the implant in a human brain as part of a clinical trial in about six months, though that timeline is far from certain.

Musk's Neuralink is one of many groups working on linking brains to computers, efforts aimed at helping treat brain disorders, overcoming brain injuries and other applications.

Rao, who watched Musk's presentation online, said he doesn't think Neuralink is ahead of the pack in terms of brain-computer interface achievements. "But ... they are quite ahead in terms of the actual hardware in the devices," he said. The Neuralink device is about the size of a large coin and is designed to be implanted in the skull, with ultra-thin wires going directly into the brain. Musk said the first two applications in people would be restoring vision and helping people with little or no ability to operate their muscles rapidly use digital devices. He said he also envisions that in someone with a broken neck, signals from the brain could be bridged to Neuralink devices in the spinal cord.

"We're confident there are no physical limitations to enabling full body functionality," said Musk, who recently took over Twitter and is the CEO of Tesla and SpaceX. In experiments by other teams, implanted



Elon Musk, Tesla CEO, attends the opening of the Tesla factory Berlin Brandenburg in Gruenheide, Germany, March 22, 2022.

Associated Press

sensors have let paralyzed people use brain signals to operate computers and move robotic arms. In a 2018 study in the journal PLOS ONE, three participants with paralysis below the neck affecting all of their limbs used an experimental brain-computer interface being tested by the consortium BrainGate. The interface records neural activity from a small sensor in the brain to navigate things like email and apps. A recent study in the journal Nature, by scientists at the Swiss research center NeuroRestore, identified a type of neuron activated

by electrical stimulation of the spinal cord, allowing nine patients with chronic spinal cord injury to walk again.

Researchers have also been working on brain and machine interfaces for restoring vision. Rao said some companies have developed retinal implants, but Musk's announcement suggested his team would use signals directly targeting the brain's visual cortex, an approach that some academic groups are also pursuing, "with limited success."

Neuralink spokespeople did not immediately re-

spond to an email to the press office. Dr. Jaimie Henderson, a neurosurgery professor at Stanford University who is an adviser for Neuralink, said one way Neuralink is different than some other devices is that it has the ability to reach into deeper layers of the brain. But he added: "There are lots of different systems that have lots of different advantages." □



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U.S. coach Berhalter to draw on Dutch lessons at World Cup

By RONALD BLUM

AP Sports Writer

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — Gregg Berhalter felt like a student when he signed with the Dutch club Zwolle 28 years ago. The U.S. coach plans to apply the lessons he learned when the Americans play the Netherlands on Saturday for a berth in the World Cup quarterfinals. "I went to Holland just out of university and (was) totally unprepared for professional level soccer," Berhalter said Friday. "If I wasn't in Holland, I don't think I would have had that building that really helped shape my ideas."

Now 49, Berhalter will match tactics against Louis van Gaal, at 71 the oldest coach in the World Cup. Van Gaal guided the Netherlands to third place in the 2014 tournament and has won seven league titles with Ajax, AZ Alkmaar, Barcelona and Bayern Munich. That success means little to the Oranje's demanding fanbase.

"If I have to believe the Dutch media, we'll never become world champion," Van Gaal said in Dutch. "In 2014 it was exactly the same. Extremely negative. Now it's the same all over again. I am used to it, and I think my players are used to it, so we will calmly move on."

Then he added playfully in English: "Maybe you can take now a picture after



Head coach Gregg Berhalter of the United States celebrates after the World Cup group B soccer match between Iran and the United States at the Al Thumama Stadium in Doha, Qatar, Wednesday, Nov. 30, 2022.

Associated Press

this declaration."

He smiled and said: "Cheese."

Van Gaal, who is out of contract after the World Cup, deflected questions about whether he would coach in Africa or replace Roberto Martinez, who parted ways with Belgium after his team was eliminated Thursday.

"You got to convince my wife," he said.

A losing finalist in 1974, 1978 and 2010, the Netherlands began this tournament with a 2-0 win over Senegal, tied Ecuador 1-1 and beat Qatar 2-0 to top Group A.

Van Gaal's team has been criticized at home for an alleged lack of attacking flair

despite an 18-game unbeaten streak. "I'm laughing because there's always criticism in Holland. How many Bond (national team) coaches are there in Holland? Sixteen million. Isn't that what they say? Seventeen million now?" Berhalter said. "I think Louis van Gaal has tough enough skin. He realizes that his job is to deliver wins."

The Americans have several Dutch ties. U.S. sporting director Earnie Stewart grew up in the Netherlands, as did current right back Sergiño Dest.

"It's going to be a pretty fun one, playing against the country I was born in," Dest said. "I know almost every

single guy over there."

Dest was teammates with the Dutch defender Daley Blind at Ajax before moving to Barcelona and then AC Milan.

"You could immediately see he was full of talent," Blind said through a translator. "He evolved really rapidly."

Van Gaal claimed he didn't recall Sparta upsetting his Ajax team in 1997.

"Being that competitive, he has to remember that game," Berhalter said, chuckling.

The U.S. has played the Netherlands five times, all friendlies. The Americans lost four before rallying late for a 4-3 win in 2015. They

have not reached the quarterfinals since 2002, losing round of 16 games in extra time to Ghana in 2010 and Belgium in 2014.

Berhalter was hired after the failure to qualify for the 2018 World Cup.

"What I observe is a vision," Van Gaal said.

"What I see is a team that is keen to execute that vision, which is of the utmost importance, and I see the conviction, especially the conviction of the players. So that for a coach must be fantastic."

Van Gaal's squad has been battling flu, much like the Americans last week. The U.S. opened its campaign in Qatar with draws against Wales and England, then beat Iran 1-0 on a goal by Christian Pulisic, who bruised his pelvis but was cleared to play Saturday. The U.S. has allowed only one goal at the World Cup. Berhalter credited a collective defense and recalled experience and demanding teammates from his Dutch days.

"Just about spacing and the positional game, third man, triangles. There was a striker, an old striker that I played with when I first got there. His name was Remco Boere. He would yell at me for giving him the ball with too much spin," Berhalter said. "If you ever laid a ball off to someone and you put it to their wrong foot, they would start yelling." □

Brewers promote Marti Wronski, say MLB's only female COO



This 2019 photo provided by the Milwaukee Brewers shows Marti Wronski at Miller Park in Milwaukee.

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE (AP) — The Milwaukee Brewers have promoted Marti Wronski to chief operating officer, making her the franchise's highest-ranking female executive since Wendy Selig-Prieb was the president and chair of the board in the early 2000s.

Brewers officials also said Wronski is the only woman to currently hold the COO title for a major-league franchise.

There are two women working as president of business operations for MLB

teams: Caroline O'Connor with the Miami Marlins and Catie Griggs with the Seattle Mariners. O'Connor was promoted last week, making the Marlins the first U.S. major sports franchisee to have women as president and general manager. The Marlins hired Kim Ng as general manager in November 2020.

The upcoming season will mark Wronski's 20th with the Brewers. She takes over a position that hadn't been filled since Rick Schlesinger was promoted to president

of business operations in 2018. "I'm grateful for the tremendous opportunities the Brewers have provided me throughout my career and aim to continue in my efforts to champion aspiring women in the sports industry and at the Milwaukee Brewers," Wronski said in a statement released by the organization.

Wronski previously worked as general counsel and senior vice president of administration, overseeing the legal, information technology and human

resource departments.

In her new position, she will assume responsibility for the business analytics and strategy teams.

Wronski worked on Marquette's law school faculty before joining the Brewers. The Brewers also promoted Jason Hartlund to executive vice president-chief commercial officer. Hartlund will oversee consumer marketing. He already was above ticket sales, suite sales, special events, concerts and business developments. □

Watson has better shot winning with Browns than fixing image

By ROB MAADDI AP Pro Football Writer

Deshaun Watson has a better chance of leading the Cleveland Browns to their first Super Bowl title than rebuilding his public image. The disgraced quarterback wouldn't address his 11-game suspension for sexual misconduct or his league-mandated therapy sessions on Thursday in his first comments since returning to the Browns.

"I have been advised to stay away from that and keep that personal," Watson said during a 16-minute session with the media in Berea, Ohio.

Watson has been accused by more than two dozen women of sexual harassment and assault during massage therapy sessions. He has settled 23 civil lawsuits brought by the women, while two others, including one filed in October, are pending.

Still, Watson could've said he's grown as a person through counseling, that he has a better understanding of how his behavior affects others and he's striving to be the best version of himself.

Of course, few people would believe him.



Cleveland Browns quarterback Deshaun Watson throws a pass during an NFL football practice at the team's training facility Wednesday, Nov. 30, 2022, in Berea, Ohio.

Associated Press

Watson doesn't have many fans outside of Cleveland and he has a long way to go to win over most folks. His actions matter more than his words, according to Rita Smith, a senior adviser to the NFL who was hired in 2014 to help shape the league's policy on domestic abuse and sexual assault.

"How I will know if he's learned anything is how he behaves in the future," Smith told The Associated Press. "If he never is accused of this kind of behavior again, then we know that he's learned something that's helpful for him.

Until then, what he says is kind of irrelevant."

The 27-year-old, three-time Pro Bowl quarterback has maintained his innocence and hasn't taken much accountability for his behavior that was labeled "egregious" and "predatory" by NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell.

"I've always stood on my innocence and always said I've never assaulted anyone or disrespected anyone, and I'm continuing to stand on that," Watson said in August after the NFL and the NFL Players Association reached a settlement on his punishment terms.

He then explained he was apologizing "for people that were triggered" by his actions.

Does he still feel the same way? Did counseling change his perspective? That's unknown.

The NFL made it a priority to mandate professional counseling and therapy as part of Watson's discipline so he could learn from mistakes, improve his decision-making and do better.

"It was really important for us that, No. 1, that he do some kind of sessions and that the person who is doing the sessions has an understanding of violence and abuse and trauma that we would suggest they look for to help him," Smith said.

Watson will face intense scrutiny everywhere: His performance on the field will be analyzed, his mannerisms on the sideline, his interactions with teammates in the huddle and his interviews with the media will be dissected.

Starting Sunday when he takes the field against his former teammates in Houston, fans will boo him, taunt and hurl insults.

"I am not worried about the atmosphere," Watson

| FIFA WORLD CUP Qatar 2022 | | | | |
|---|-------|---|-----|---|
| Group | | G | | |
|  | 2 - 3 |  | dec | 2 |
| SER | | SUI | | |
|  | 1 - 0 |  | dec | 2 |
| CAM | | BRA | | |
| Group | | H | | |
|  | 2 - 1 |  | dec | 2 |
| KOR | | POR | | |
|  | 0 - 2 |  | dec | 2 |
| GHA | | URU | | |
| Round 16 | | | | |
|  | - |  | dec | 3 |
| NED | | USA | | |
|  | - |  | dec | 4 |
| ENG | | SEN | | |
|  | - |  | dec | 3 |
| ARG | | AUS | | |
|  | - |  | dec | 4 |
| FRA | | POL | | |

said. "I have to go in and make sure I execute the game plan."

The Browns haven't won an NFL title since 1964. They have as many winless seasons (one) as playoff victories since 1999. □

Panthers owner David Tepper scrutinized in criminal probe

By JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — Carolina Panthers owner David Tepper and his real estate company are the focus of a criminal investigation to see if they misused any public money in their failed effort to build a practice facility for the NFL team in South Carolina.

The York County Sheriff's Office said state agents and local prosecutors are aiding its investigation, and that the probe does not mean that any crime happened.

"An investigation is simply an inquiry and should not create any inference that wrongdoing has been committed by any party," York County Sheriff Kevin Tolson and Solicitor Kev-

in Brackett said in a joint statement Thursday night that named Tepper and GT Real Estate, the company created to oversee the construction project.

Tepper's company denied any criminal wrongdoing and suggested the timing of the announcement might be meant to disrupt a settlement the team reached with York County to repay more than \$21 million, an amount roughly equivalent to the sales tax money the project received to improve roads around the facility.

"This is a straightforward commercial matter that is being fully resolved. The underlying disputes arise under contracts that were jointly negotiated by the parties and are publicly

available. The funds paid by the county were handled consistent with the terms of those contracts," the statement from Tepper's GT Real Estate said.

Tepper, a hedge fund manager who is one of the NFL's wealthiest owners, and the Panthers announced plans for an \$800 million practice facility, team offices, sports medicine complex, hotels and entertainment near Rock Hill in 2019.

Both local and South Carolina leaders cheered the investment offering incentives and relishing getting a piece of the NFL team away from North Carolina and Charlotte, where the team plays its games about 25 miles (40 kilometers) away. But after less than two years, Tepper's company

abruptly stopped work on the facility before its steel superstructure was finished, and declared bankruptcy. Work continues on an in-

terstate interchange promised by the state, and Tepper's company is trying to sell the land in the busy, growing region. □



Carolina Panthers owner David Tepper watches during warm ups before an NFL football game between the Carolina Panthers and the Denver Broncos on Sunday, Nov. 27, 2022, in Charlotte, N.C.

Associated Press

Weekly SPECIALS

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
|  <p>U.S. Boneless Pork Sirloin / Fricadeau</p> <p>Per KG</p> |  <p>Ground Pork</p> <p>Per KG</p> |  <p>Peppers Green</p> <p>Per KG</p> |  <p>Orquideas Cabernet Sauvignon 750ml</p> <p>Each</p> |
|  <p>Angus Beef Gyros Strips</p> <p>Per KG</p> |  <p>Nathans Skinless Beef Franks 14oz</p> <p>Each</p> |  <p>Goya Olives/Manzanilla 6.75oz</p> <p>Each</p> |  <p>Gwoon Zilveruitjes Zoetzuur 320gr</p> <p>Each</p> |
|  <p>Lay's Frietjes Sastesaus/ Potatje Mayo 150gr</p> <p>Each</p> |  <p>EE 100% Orange Juice 64oz</p> <p>Each</p> |  <p>EE Quick 1 Minute Oats Whole Grain 42oz</p> <p>Each</p> |  <p>Gwoon Blanke Rozijnen 375gr</p> <p>Each</p> |
|  <p>Aceite De Soya Crisol 64oz</p> <p>Each</p> |  <p>Fabuloso Trap 27.9oz</p> <p>Each</p> |  <p>Yoplait Yogurt Assorted 16oz</p> <p>Each</p> |  <p>Pailock Salted Boneless/Bocalo 11B</p> <p>Each</p> |
|  <p>Super Wet Trans Gel Clear 2.2lb</p> <p>Each</p> |  <p>Jewelry Wooden Box Organizer Brown</p> <p>Each</p> |  <p>Provolone Cheese 100 GR</p> <p>Each</p> |  <p>Mortadella 100 GR</p> <p>Each</p> |

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